

December 2002

## CPUC VOTE PUTS UTILITY UNDERGROUNDING ON FAST TRACK

### 35 MILES OF WIRES TO BE UNDERGROUNDED ANNUALLY

On December 19<sup>th</sup>, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) gave final approval of a plan that will dramatically increase and speed up the undergrounding of overhead utility lines within the city limits. The proposal calls for an increased surcharge on gross electrical receipts to pay for an accelerated program. Mayor Murphy and I have been aggressively lobbying the CPUC for this plan since March, shortly after the City Council voted 6-3 to approve the plan in late January.

This is a major infrastructure victory for our older, urban neighborhoods. By increasing the amount of undergrounding throughout the city, we will be able to improve safety for our residents, remove the visual blight and fulfill a promise I made to remove these unsightly utility lines in our older communities.

The undergrounding surcharge will raise approximately \$36.5 million a year for burying utility wires. Those funds, along with the \$10 million a year currently collected under a state-mandated undergrounding program, will allow San Diego Gas & Electric Co. to complete the process of taking down San Diego's overhead lines in about 20 years.



Aggressive lobbying by Councilmember Toni Atkins and Mayor Dick Murphy helped convince the California Public Utilities Commission to adopt a plan which will allow for 35 miles of utility wires to be undergrounded annually in San Diego. Under the current plan, only 10 miles of unsightly wires are put underground each year.

Currently, 10 miles of utility wires are taken down and placed underground each year. That will increase to approximately 35 miles a year under this plan.

The stepped-up plan is part of a 50-year franchise agreement between SDG&E and the city of San Diego. Now in its 30th year, it has been renegotiated for the final 20 years.

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# TOWN HALL MEETINGS ON PARKING FOR NORTH PARK THEATRE CONCLUDE

## Three Options To Be Explored

On Thursday, December 5th, I met with community members to hear a progress report from City Redevelopment Agency staff on the North Park Theatre and the proposed parking structure across the street from the theater on North Park Way between 29th and 30th streets.

The meeting was the third and last in a series of meetings hosted by the Council District Three office in conjunction with North Park Main Street, the Greater North Park Community Planning Committee, the North Park Community Association, the North Park Redevelopment Project Area Committee and other community leaders to engage North Park residents and business owners in the ongoing discussion about how to create the parking needed to make the North Park Theatre viable as a live performance venue.

At the meeting, Redevelopment staff reported on three financing and development scenarios for constructing the necessary parking:

- 1) A structure funded and built by the City with redevelopment funds;
- 2) A public/private partnership to develop a three- or four-story parking structure that would include up to 400 parking spaces and 5,000 square feet of commercial/retail space; and
- 3) A public/private partnership to develop a seven- or eight-story parking structure as part of a much larger residential condominium project.

The City's Redevelopment staff presented these proposals and responded to comments from the public. They will issue a final report and recommendation on January 22nd. The public is invited to learn more about these proposals and provide their input at the following meetings:

North Park Redevelopment Project Area Committee:  
Tuesday, January 14, 7:00pm, at the North Park Community Service Center, 3956 30th Street.

Greater North Park Community Planning Committee:  
Tuesday, January 21, 6:30pm, at North Park Christian Fellowship, 2901 North Park Way.

City Council/Redevelopment Agency Meeting: Tuesday, January 28, 10:00am, at City Council Chambers, City Hall, 202 "C" Street, Downtown.

The approval of a development plan for the parking structure represents the last major hurdle to restore the North Park Theatre as a live performance venue. We're closer than we've ever been to fulfilling a dream that we've shared for the past two decades.

The City has already negotiated a development agreement with an experienced local developer, Bud Fischer, who has secured a reputable San Diego Theatre company as a tenant and operator. If all goes according to plan, the North Park Theatre will reopen in 24 months as the new home of the Lyric Opera San Diego (formerly San Diego Comic Opera).

## NORTH PARK THEATRE SEISMIC RETROFIT RECEIVES UNANIMOUS COUNCIL APPROVAL

On December 10<sup>th</sup>, the City Council voted unanimously to support the allocation of \$655,000 for the seismic retrofit of the North Park Theatre. The seismic work should be



With Council approval of the seismic retrofit accomplished, and funding and development options moving forward for parking, the North Park Theatre is on its way to once again being a live-performance venue.

completed by the end of April 2003. At that time the theater will be conveyed to developer Bud Fischer who will finish the historic restoration of the theatre and prepare it to become the new home of the Lyric Opera San Diego.

The \$655,000 in funding for this seismic work will come from North Park Redevelopment funds set aside for this purpose.

The rehabilitation of this theater has been a dream of the North Park community for decades, and with this action the City takes a huge stride forward toward making this historic theater a viable venue for live performance.

The theater is a cornerstone for the revitalization of North Park. Now we are one more step closer to realizing this dream, which remains one of my top priorities.



## I-15 PARKS RECEIVE \$1.2 MILLION IN FEDERAL FUNDS

Improvements To Teralta Park and Park de la Cruz Slated To Begin in Late 2003

The San Diego region of Caltrans has received \$1.2 million in federal ISTEA (Intermodal Surface Transportation Enhancement Act) funds administered by the State Highway Operation Protection Program (SHOPP) to complete park improvements in the Interstate 15 / 40th Street Corridor at Teralta Neighborhood Park and Park de la Cruz / 38th Street Canyon Park. The City has committed \$156,000 for total funding of \$1,356,000.



Park de la Cruz, in the Cherokee Point neighborhood of City Heights, is one of two Mid-City parks that will reap the benefits of recent federal and city funding commitments.

Increasing the amount of park space in our older, urban neighborhoods remains one of my top priorities. This grant helps us provide for many of the amenities that the community has wanted, but until now have gone unfunded. I have and will continue to push for funds to give residents the top-notch facilities they deserve.

The ISTEA grant will be combined with a Federal Land and Water Conservation (LWCF) grant recently received by the City to construct the 38th Street Canyon Park. Park Planning staff is meeting with the Caltrans Project Manager to determine the specific scope of work, after which Caltrans and the City of San Diego will enter into a cooperative agreement allowing the City to complete the improvements.

Once an agreement is finalized, project construction should begin in late 2003.

The City has been working with Caltrans for several years to make this grant opportunity a reality. These funds will help complete the improvements to these two vital community parks.

## SDG&E PROMOTES ENERGY EFFICIENCY WITH FREE BULB AND LAMP EXCHANGE

Over 600 Compact Fluorescent Lights Distributed

I was pleased to greet more than 100 residents who showed up on Thursday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, at the North Park Family Resource Center at 2828 University Avenue to take part in a San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) energy-saving program. As part of the program, SDG&E swaps out incandescent bulbs and halogen torchieres for new energy-efficient light bulbs at no cost to the consumer.

SDG&E holds these one-day programs throughout the county in an effort to increase consumer awareness of easy ways to reduce energy consumption. The program allows people to turn in two halogen torchiere lamps—not just the bulbs but the entire lamp—and ten 75-watt or higher incandescent bulbs for a one-for-one exchange.

Additionally, SDG&E uses these events to provide information to customers about other programs they provide to consumers, including the CARE program, which provides for a 20 percent discount on energy bills; the Energy Team, which deals with free energy-saving home improvements; Medical Baseline, which provides energy at the lowest rate possible for people with special medical needs; and the Home Energy Audit program, which helps consumers find out where they're using energy and the best ways to conserve energy and save money. For more information on these programs, call 1-800-411-SDGE (7343).

During the course of the November 14<sup>th</sup> event, 619 compact fluorescent bulbs were distributed, 38 new energy-efficient torchiere lamps were exchanged, and 23 new CARE applications were filled out by the 102 customers who participated.

Future events are planned for the Third District, and I'll make sure to let you know when and where they'll be held.



Councilmember Atkins helped hand out energy-saving information at the recent SDG&E event.



# Photo Gallery



(left) Councilmember Atkins with North Park Main Street President Ron Sperry and (right) the owners of Urban Body, Robin and Frank Kole, at the annual Main Street Holiday Party at Sumner & Dene Gallery.



Councilmembers Toni Atkins and Jim Madaffer present members of the San Diego Zoological Society with a Council Resolution honoring the accomplishments of the San Diego Zoo and Wild Animal Park.



Councilmember Atkins presents a special commendation to City Heights CDC President Ramon Espinal on the occasion of the CDC's 21st anniversary picnic.



Councilmember Atkins presents a Council Resolution to Pauline des Granges honoring her years of service to Balboa Park.



Will the real Toni Atkins please stand up? Councilmember Toni Atkins meets with her namesake, San Diego Police Department Traffic Officer Tony Atkins. Both Toni and Tony are native Virginians.



(above) Councilmember Atkins with San Diego Police Chief David Bejarano and North Park Police Storefront Volunteer Coordinator Pat Laughlin, and (right) with North Park Community Association (NPCA) President Beth Swersie, NPCA board member and Bird Park Concert co-chair Nellie Harris, and Nellie's sons Patrick (3 years old) and Casey (1 1/2 years old) at the North Park Lions Holiday Parade on December 7th.



Councilmember Atkins and Mama's Kitchen Executive Director Alberto Cortes place a heart-shaped ornament on the Tree of Life at the December 1st tree-lighting ceremony at Village Hillcrest. Donations for the ornaments help support people living with HIV/AIDS.